

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1660

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 1449

EXDIS

1. AT HIS DINNER MARCH 6, FOR VISITING AUSTRALIAN GOVERNOR GENERAL, I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT DAOUD.

2. I WISHED HIM A SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO INDIA ON WHICH HE EMBARKS MARCH 10 AND TOLD HIM THAT WE ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO CONTINUING THE IMPROVEMENT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA. THIS GAVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY, WHICH HE USED, TO SAY THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES ON OCCASION DO THINGS WHICH GIVE RISE TO SUSPICIONS ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS.

3. I TOLD DAOUD THAT I WOULD NOT OF COURSE ASK HIM TO APPROVE OF THE CHANGE IN OUR ARMS POLICY. THIS REMARK BROUGHT FORTH A PRESIDENTIAL CHUCKLE. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT ONE OF OUR PRINCIPAL INTERESTS IS TO PRESERVE AND IMPROVE THE GOOD RELATIONS WE HAVE WITH NOT ONLY INDIA BUT ALSO WITH AFGHANISTAN, AND ANOTHER IS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THIS REGION OF THE WORLD. I SAID THAT ANY OTHER ASPECT OF OUR POLICY IS SECONDARY TO THESE CONSIDERATIONS. I ADDED THAT THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHANGE IN OUR ARMS POLICY AND OF RECENT EVENTS INSIDE PAKISTAN WERE

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ENTIRELY COINCIDENTIAL AND UNRELATED.

4. DAOUD SAID THAT AFGHANISTAN TOO WANTS A CONTINUATION OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. HE ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT WE HAD BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE MISUNDERSTANDING RESULTING FROM SENATOR PERCY'S CONVERSATION WITH MR. NAIM IN KATHMANDU.

5. COMMENT: THIS WAS A CORDIAL CONVERSATION AND I THINK WE ARE OVER THE IMMEDIATE HUMP OF PROBLEMS CAUSED BY OUR CHANGE IN ARMS SALES POLICY. THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES BOTH BECAUSE THE CHANGE IN POLICY IS FUNDAMENTALLY UNPALATABLE TO THE DAOUD REGIME AND ALSO BECAUSE AFGHAN UNHAPPINESS WILL BE REFRESHED EACH TIME WE MAKE AN ACTUAL SALE. AS FAR AS OUR EFFORTS TO STEMP THE FLOW PROPAGANDA ATTACKS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN ARE CONCERNED, WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT PROPAGANDA IS THE PRINCIPAL WEAPON THE DAOUD REGIME FEELS IT CAN USE WITH RELATIVE IMPUNITY AGAINST PAKISTAN AND IS THEREFORE UNLIKELY TO STOP USING IT BARRING A SETTLEMENT OF THE MAIN ISSUES. THERE IS ALSO A CONTINUING FELT NEED ON DAOUD'S PART TO USE THE PROPAGANDA VEHICLE TO PLEASE HIS OWN DOMESTIC PUSHTUN EXTREMISTS.
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